



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Maryland's Social Services Agency



MEDIA ADVISORY

For immediate release:

June 8, 2010

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DHR SECRETARY NAMES FOUR LEGISLATORS 'CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN' FOR HELPING TO PASS A KEY CHILD SUPPORT BILL

SILVER SPRING -- Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR) Secretary Brenda Donald named House Speaker Michael Busch; Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee Chairman Brian Frosh; Delegate Kathleen Dumais; and Delegate Jeffery Waldstreicher 2010 'Champions for Children' for their work to update the state's child support guidelines – the first update in 22 years.

The Family and Juvenile Law Section of the Maryland Bar Association teamed up with DHR to hold the awards celebration last night in Silver Spring. The child support guidelines are used by judges to determine the amount of child support parents must pay.

Governor O'Malley signed the updated bill into law last month and it will go into effect October 1, 2010. Parents who establish a new child support case with the Child Support Enforcement Administration after October 1, 2010 will have their child support order calculated using the updated guidelines.

In comparison to the current guidelines, the vast majority of parents with new child support cases will pay approximately \$50 to \$100 more a month in child support under the new guidelines. However, under the new guidelines, the lowest-income child support payers will actually pay slightly less than they would have under the old guidelines.

Approximately 500,000 children rely on child support for their financial stability in Maryland and DHR manages about half of the child support caseload. In fiscal year 2009, DHR collected and distributed more than \$512 million in child support payments.

Prior to the bill's passage, Maryland ranked the wealthiest state in the nation but only 41st in average child support obligation. Prior to updating the law, Maryland was one of only seven states with outdated child support guidelines.

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The Maryland Department of Human Resources is the state's social service provider. The agency collaborates with 24 local jurisdictions to: provide foster care, adoption, and protective services to children; collect and distribute child support payments; provide protective services, case- management, supportive housing, in-home aide services, and respite care to vulnerable adults; and provide temporary cash, food stamps, and medical assistance to families. It also funds programs for homeless persons, refugees, and migrant- workers, victims of crime and women who are displaced, battered, or assaulted. Last year, DHR served 760,000 people in need. In terms of its annual budget, DHR is Maryland's fourth largest state agency.

- Martin O'Malley, Governor
- Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor
- Brenda Donald, Secretary